

Home & Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 1995

Gulf Arab ministers discuss Iraq and Iran

DUBAI (R) — Gulf Arab states were expected to differ again on how to deal with Iran and Iraq when their foreign ministers met in Saudi Arabia on Saturday, diplomats said.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) struck a solid front when Iraq invaded Kuwait, a member, in 1990, hosting the international alliance that drove the Iraqi army back out of the emirate and funding it with tens of billions of dollars.

But recently cracks in the edifice have begun to emerge.

By the understated standards of Gulf politics, Oman and Qatar dealt a stinging blow to Saudi Arabia when their foreign ministers failed to show in Jeddah for GCC talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Instead, they held separate talks at home with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Seed Al Sahaf.

Although U.S. officials played down the significance of the ministers' absence — Qatar and Oman were represented by ambassadors at the Jeddah talks with Mr. Christopher — some diplomats say the move angered Saudi Arabia.

"Of course it is an insult to the Americans... how can they stay away from a meeting discussing, among other things, the most important issue for the U.S. in the Gulf — maintaining U.N. sanctions on Iraq," said an Arab diplomat familiar with the talks.

Both states also differ with some GCC partners, including Saudi Arabia, over improving relations with Iran, the region's non-Arab power which has often had tense ties with the alliance.

Gulf-based Arab diplomats also say some in the oil-rich GCC are unhappy with what they see as an increasing tendency by Saudi Arabia to treat them as "younger brothers" in the alliance which also groups the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain.

"Due to its size and economic power, it is natural for Saudi Arabia to dominate the GCC and that has been accepted (by other members)," said one Arab analyst. "But now they want more dominance."

"Sometimes it appears if you want to deal with the

GCC, you have to go through Riyadh although the (rotating) chairmanship this year is in Bahrain's hands," he added.

The six states formed the GCC in 1981, when regional giants Iraq and Iran were slugging it out in a war they feared would spill over into their backyard.

Often seen as homogenous, conservative sheikhdoms, insiders say the GCC states actually vary quite significantly in their political and economic makeups.

Oman's minister missed the talks apparently because it coincided with a visit by Iraq's foreign minister who had earlier been to Qatar on the first such visits to GCC states by a senior Baghdad official since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Oman currently sits on the 15-member Security Council and diplomats say it appears to favour an easing of the Iraq sanctions mainly to alleviate suffering of ordinary Iraqis — a formula used in recent weeks by some officials in Qatar and the UAE.

The UAE's defence minister and crown prince of Dubai, General Sheikh Mohammad Ben Rashid Al Maktoum, expressed an opinion that is now widespread in the region at a briefing with Arab journalists in January:

"How can we make peace with Israel when we do not make peace or deal with an ancient and thoroughbred Arab people that has left its distinctive imprint on Arab history and culture?"

But Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, like the United States, are opposed to easing the boycott or direct dealing with Iraq.

Differences over Iran centre around calls by Qatar and Oman for improved GCC ties through dialogue but other members, including Saudi Arabia, are suspicious of Iran's policies in the region, its rearmament programme and what some see as "hostile" behaviour after it deployed missiles on islands in the Gulf.

"We can't change our neighbours so we have to accept the geography of our region and deal with Iraq and Iran. If we do not deal with Iran there will always be tension in the region," said a Gulf Arab analyst.

"Sometimes it appears if you want to deal with the

U.S. was 'surprised' by Conoco-Iran deal

WASHINGTON (USA) — The State Department's Acting spokeswoman, Christine Shelly, said Friday the State Department was "very surprised" by the announcement earlier this month that Conoco, a U.S. energy firm, had agreed to develop offshore oil gas fields for Iran in the Gulf.

President Clinton has since issued an executive order which had the effect of torpedoing the deal and Conoco has said it will not go ahead with the project.

Ms. Shelly said the department has "gone back and perused our own records" concerning conversations with Conoco officials.

"I don't know if our search at this point is exhaustive, but certainly from what we have been able to piece together, it is very much our impression that we learned of the discussions between Conoco and Iran in a kind of bit-and-

pieces fashion," she said. "We, in fact, were very surprised when the actual announcement of the arrangement was made."

Department records indicate that when discussions were held with Conoco officials in the past, "we conveyed to those officials our belief and our view that such a deal would not be consistent with American policy toward Iran," she said.

Asked about comments by Peter Tarnoff, under-secretary of state for political affairs, who told members of Congress this week that the United States would urge Japan not to give financial aid to Iran, Ms. Shelly replied: "That's certainly a well-known position of ours. We try to get other countries, and certainly key allies of ours, to abstain from making official credits to Iran for projects which take place there," she added.

Jordan Times tel. 667171

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Le Prince La Sirene

17:30 Pyramide

18:00 Tour Du Monde Tour Du Cicl

18:30 News in French

19:15 The Bold and the Beautiful

20:30 Almanac Home

21:00 The Albums Show

21:30 Heartbeat

22:00 News in English

22:20 Feature film: "Frozen Frame"

23:59 The Hidden Room

PRAYER TIMES

04:31 Fair

05:38 (Sunrise) Dua

11:44 Dhuhr

15:10 Asr

17:50 Maghreb

19:07 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Switzerland Tel: 81040

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.

632785

St. Joseph's Church Tel: 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637440

St. George's Church Tel: 661757

Terrace Church Tel: 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel: 63541.

Anglican Church Tel: 630851, Tel:

628543.

Assumption Catholic Church Tel:

71131.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel:

77261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel: 771751.

Assumption International Church Tel:

65256.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel:

82432.

German-speaking Evangelical Church Tel: 654195.

The Latter-Day Saints Tel: 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel: 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel: 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with clouds building up. Scattered showers are expected in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom and winds northerly moderate to strong. In Amman moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Max/Min temp.

Amman 7/14

Aqaba 13/23

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Clinton opens White House to Irish nationalist leader

U.K. to announce Sinn Fein talks 'in days'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting as St. Patrick's Day peacemaker, President Bill Clinton welcomed Irish nationalist Gerry Adams, an ally to the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA), to a White House reception Friday night.

In a measure of the lingering pain of Northern Ireland's sectarian bloodletting, a Protestant politician whose father was killed by the IRA said he'd find it "very difficult" to be in the same room.



U.S. President Bill Clinton walks into the East Room of the White House as Gerry Adams (right with beard and glasses) of Sinn Fein watches. Mr. Adams has been in the U.S. on a ten-day fund-raising trip and was invited to the White House to celebrate St. Patrick's Day (AFP photo)

Technically, the White House celebration was in honour of Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland. The Clintons — the president in an Irish green tie and the lady in a green dress — escorted the prime minister and his wife, Fionnula, down the state staircase as an Irish bagpiper led the way.

But it was the invitation to Mr. Adams that drew the most notice: Open annoyance from the British government, high praise from

Mr. Bruton and the legions of Irish nationalist supporters in the United States.

Mr. Adams was among the guests greeted by the president in the receiving line.

In a luncheon speech, Mr. Bruton praised Mr. Clinton for showing "great wisdom" with his decision to invite Mr. Adams to the White House.

"One should never underestimate the extent to which people in Ireland look to the United States for inspiration and encouragement," he

said.

As Mr. Adams pointed out, St. Patrick's Day is a holiday more celebrated in the United States than in Ireland.

At the White House, a buffet laid out for the 350 guests included smoked Irish fish, soda bread, Dublin Bay prawns, and West Cork crabmeat, Irish breakfast canape, Limerick ham, Irish whiskey truffles, and strawberry shamrock pie.

After a morning meeting with Mr. Bruton, Mr. Clinton appealed to those who have agreed to a ceasefire in Northern Ireland to "take the next step and begin to seriously discuss getting rid of these weapons so they can never be used again and violence will never again return to the land."

Earlier Friday, Mr. Adams told a news conference that Sinn Fein, the party he leads, has "no authority or control over arms."

Mr. Adams also denied he has ever been a member of the IRA.

Mr. Bruton told reporters that even though Mr. Adams did not have technical influence on the IRA's arms, "he has tremendous influence over the IRA."

Sinn Fein is a legal political party that supports the IRA,



President of Sinn Fein Gerry Adams points to his glass as he speaks across the East Room of the White House during St. Patrick's Day

party. Mr. Adams' visit to the White House has infuriated Great Britain due to his ties to the Irish Republican Army (AFP photo)

Adams is in."

British Prime Minister John Major didn't try to hide his annoyance over the invitation to Mr. Adams as well as the decision to allow him to raise money in the United States.

In a speech at the National Press Club, Mr. Bruton said that if lasting peace is to come to Northern Ireland, the politicians on all sides must start talking to one another and the huge store of arms must be "put out of commission."

The gap between supporters of continued British rule and those determined to end it was illustrated by the feelings of Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, a hardline Protestant party that is a counterpoint to Sinn Fein.

"I can recall at least six times in which the special relationship has been declared dead," said Mr. McMichael.

"It is if it's wrong."

Mr. McMichael said he would attend the reception, but "it's very difficult for me to be in the very room Gerry

McMichael is."

Over the past several days, Mr. Major was unavailable to take two telephone calls from Mr. Clinton. Spokesmen for the two leaders said they would talk this weekend.

Mr. Clinton's spokesman Mike McCurry was asked if the strains meant the "special relationship" between the two countries was dead.

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Beatles song
to get first
single release

Yeltsin offer on V-E parade improves summit chances

WASHINGTON (AP) — Boris Yeltsin's acceptance of a U.S. request to avoid military hardware displays at a 50th anniversary celebration of the allied victory in Europe (V-E) improves chances President Bill Clinton will go to Moscow in May, administration officials said Friday.

The visit would include a summit meeting between the two leaders on several touchy issues, including the heavy civilian toll Russia has taken in fighting independence-minded rebels in Chechenya and Russia's cooperation with Iran in the construction of a nuclear reactor complex near the Gulf.

Mr. Yeltsin responded favourably in early March to a U.S. request not to display military forces at the May 9 celebration in Moscow and then told foreign editors from several newspapers Thursday he would tailor the Red Square parade to suit Mr. Clinton.

The president "is somewhat concerned by the planning of the event. He does not want there to be a military parade. I think we will comply with these preconditions," Mr. Yeltsin was quoted as telling the editors.

Mr. Clinton said Friday that he appreciated Mr. Yeltsin's remarks and that he expected to make a decision about "that whole set of issues very shortly."

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said the parade was not the only aspect of the summit that was under discussion.

Other administration officials said a consideration was scheduling Clinton stops in Britain and France, as well, for V-E Day celebrations there.

But the officials said that Clinton probably would go and that Mr. Yeltsin's arrangements for the parade would improve chances of his acceptance of the invitation.

"We want to celebrate victory over fascism in World War II, but in a way that does not send a Russian military signal to the world, to the American public and to Congress," said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Yeltsin's offer lends itself to that."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher will meet next week in Geneva with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on the likely summit agenda, which also includes Russia's concern about NATO's possibly taking in former Warsaw Pact allies next year as members.

Mr. Clinton is prepared to exchange letters with Mr. Yeltsin to assure him the alliance was not an anti-Russian bloc.

Mr. Clinton wants to come but is "a bit concerned about the whole scenario," Mr. Yeltsin told the foreign editors of seven newspapers.

In the interview, Mr. Yeltsin said he would limit the parade in Red Square to war veterans.

Mr. Yeltsin has been urging Mr. Clinton to join other Western leaders in Moscow on V-E Day, then attend a summit meeting. Mr. Clinton has given no definitive response. They agreed at a summit in Washington last September to meet again in Moscow in the first half of 1995.

The administration, while critical of some of Russia's actions, is determined to work with Mr. Yeltsin in the interest of political and economic reform. The State Department and the Agency for International Development are trying to persuade Congress not to cut aid to Russia.

If Mr. Clinton decides to accept the Russian president's invitation and attend the May 9 event will the leaders of Britain and Germany follow?

A spokesman for Germany's Helmut Kohl said Friday that the chancellor was still undecided and the office of Britain's John Major said it was not prepared to make an announcement.

The two leaders are concerned chiefly about being perceived as endorsing Moscow's war on separatist Chechenya. Both have criticised Yeltsin for allowing the brutal targeting of civilians.

Another reason for hesitation may be one-upmanship.



United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali (right) greets Croatian President Franjo Tudjman (left) upon his arrival at the Secret-

ary General's office at the U.N. in New York (AFP photo)

Sarajevo Airport attacks may be considered war crimes — U.N.

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Serb attacks on United Nations and Red Cross planes landing at Sarajevo's airport in recent days could qualify as war crimes under international law, a U.N. source said Saturday.

United Nations officials were considering whether to prosecute those responsible for firing on planes using the airport, the U.N. source told Reuters.

"We think the attacks qualify as war crimes and we are investigating the possibility of prosecuting under international law," said the U.N. source who asked not to be named.

Four planes have been hit by Serb gunfire in the past eight days.

An international Red Cross plane was holed by Serb heavy machinegun fire while landing here on March 11 and a U.N. plane carrying special envoy Yasushi Akashi and his top two military commanders was hit the next day.

Those incidents were enough to cause a suspension of Red Cross and U.N. humanitarian aid flights into the city, but U.N. administrative flights carrying peacekeepers and civilian personnel continued.

Two of those flights were then hit by heavy machinegun fire within minutes of one another while landing in Sarajevo Friday afternoon.

"The firing points are assessed to be Bosnian Serb (BSA) positions," U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanko said Saturday.

The United Nations will take all necessary steps to ensure the airlift continues into Sarajevo and the military option is one possibility. If the situation gets out of hand we might take steps to neutralise the firing points."

The Sarajevo Airport sits

between Bosnian government and separatist Serb lines west of the city and is a lifeline for the Bosnian capital's 380,000 residents.

A 20-year-old man was shot dead and three other people, including a woman in her 70's, were wounded by sniper fire Saturday morning in Sarajevo, hospital officials said.

Oliver Brkic was shot dead in the Dobrinja Quarter, in the west of the city near the confrontation line, a couple of hours after a woman in her 70's was wounded in the leg nearby.

A soldier, Muharem Demirovic, 53, was severely wounded with a shot to the leg in Mojimilo Brdo, a short distance away.

And a 36-year-old woman, Fatimah Tahirovic, was also shot in the leg near the bridge of "brotherhood and unity," further into the city, hospital officials said.

A U.N. convoy entered northwest Bosnia Friday to relieve desperate food shortages, and Red Cross trucks carrying food for the hungry also proceeded after being blocked by Croatian aid.

U.N. officials have warned of severe malnutrition and even starvation in the besieged Bihać enclave, where about 200,000 people, most of them Muslims, depend solely on humanitarian aid.

Agency trucks carried 100 tonnes of beans, beef yeast, cooking oil, flour and fish into the region, Alenka Lisiški, a spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Zagreb.

"Every convoy is important," Ms. Lisiški said. "However, 100 tonnes of food are a drop in the ocean considering the enormous needs of the people in Bihać and the misery they have been facing for many months

now."

Since May, the U.N. aid agency has met only about 20 per cent of the enclave's food needs. The last food convoy arrived on Feb. 28 in the region, where Muslim-led government forces are fighting Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia and rebel Bosnian Muslims.

The United Nations was able to send the food after Croatian Serbs granted the trucks permission to travel through territory they hold bordering the Bihać enclave.

Meanwhile, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman reported progress Saturday in defining a new mandate for United Nations troops he had earlier threatened to evict from his country.

Mr. Tudjman returned from a three-day visit to the United States saying talks with Washington officials had proved constructive.

"I discussed... the problems related to our cancellation of the U.N. mandate with the most senior U.S. officials," Mr. Tudjman told Croatian State Radio.

"We reached full agreement on the issues and agreed on further cooperation."

Mr. Tudjman ordered the U.N. troops to withdraw from the areas under rebel Serb control after March 31, arguing that their presence only helped consolidate a breakaway state the Serbs proclaimed in 1991.

The move prompted fears of a renewed war with the Serbs and he recently rescinded his decision under strong pressure from Washington, but he demanded that the U.N. presence in Croatia be halved and that they deploy on Croatia's international borders.

One priority is the risk of radioactive leaks from the wrecked Soviet nuclear submarine and other reactors dumped by Russians on the ocean bed off Norway.

NATO is backing efforts to monitor levels of radiation, but acknowledges it has no clear idea of how to prevent leaks.

The allies also want to help Russian scientists work out how to dispose of arms from the Soviet nuclear arsenal, including 170 other nuclear submarines due to be decommissioned over the next 10 years.

One solution being considered by NATO nations is helping Russia develop technology to turn weapons-grade plutonium into fuel for nuclear power plants. Safety at those plants also must be improved.

NATO is also advising East European nations on how to clean up abandoned military bases, where faulty storage and disposal has often left the area contaminated by fuel, heavy metals and acids.

With red threat gone, NATO goes green

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO, no longer faced with the red threat, is going green.

The Western military alliance will help clean up the environmental mess in Eastern Europe to foster closer relations with its former Communist foes, a NATO spokesman said.

Among the problems NATO-sponsored scientists are now tackling with colleagues from Russia and other former Warsaw Pact nations are:

— Disposing of plutonium from shelved nuclear weapons.

— Cleaning up the Red Army's old bases.

— Handling radioactive waste seeping from sunken nuclear subs.

— Combating pollution in the Black Sea.

NATO hopes the cleanups and a special unit working on environmental cooperation will improve the alliance's image — especially in Russia.

An environmental protection workshop NATO held in Siberia last September helped dispel negative images

of the alliance among local Russians, the news conference said.

Some environmental activists, however, maintain that the greening of NATO is really driven by the alliance's need to find new roles now that it no longer had to defend the West from communism.

"It makes sense if you're trying to justify your budget in tight times," said Shann Burnie, nuclear research coordinator with the environmental group Greenpeace.

Mr. Burnie said military forces are among the largest polluters in the world and called on NATO to first address its own environmental problems.

NATO agrees there are environmental problems posed by allied forces — like disposing of dozens of American and British nuclear submarines due for retirement under Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START).

But the alliance says the environmental dangers in the East are more pressing.

China tells Japan not to forget war

BEIJING (R) — China said Saturday it would hold grand celebrations to mark this year's 50th anniversary of the end of the war with Japan and told Tokyo it should never forget the conflict.

"We hope that through grand celebrations as well as people around the world, including the Japanese people, will not forget that war and will not let that kind of thing happen again."

China was a principal victim of Japan's military expansion into Asia in the 1930s which culminated in Tokyo's involvement in World War II.

Beijing is to commemorate Japan's August, 1945, defeat with a series of activities, including a new film. The Nanjing Massacre, chronicling Japanese atrocities in China.

KEDO was set up this month to finance and provide

Civilians hurt as Russian forces continue to pound Chechen town

SHALI, Russia (Agencies) — Four civilians were seriously injured as fierce fighting continued through the night between Russian forces and Chechen separatists near here, medical sources said.

The three women and a child were seriously wounded in the village of Belgorod, eight kilometres northeast of Shali and practically on the front line, according to a doctor at the Shali hospital where they were taken.

Villages fleeing Belgorod Saturday morning said it had been bombed by Russian warplanes throughout the night.

Shali lies 20 kilometres (12 miles) southeast of the Chechen capital Grozny and has become the de facto rebel capital since Grozny fell to the Russians in February.

Artillery barrages, fire from multiple rocket launchers and machine gun fire could be heard until 5:00 a.m. (0200 GMT) along the entire front line to the west and southwest of Shali.

At least five rockets fell on two streets in the centre of

the town around 11:30 p.m. (2030 GMT) Friday, hitting three houses but injuring no one, residents said.

Khamzat Ismailov, pointing to the devastated courtyard of his house, said: "Myself, my wife, my four children and my mother were asleep when the rocket fell in the yard."

"We were only sleeping 15 metres away. We survived by a miracle. Now we're going to get out," he said.

Chechen fighters returning from the front line, which runs along the banks of the river Argun to the south, said military positions remained unchanged.

Russian forces had reached Thursday a bridge controlling the western entry to the town, about six kilometres away.

The fighters said the village of Chechen-Ayul, near Belgorod and halfway between Shali and Grozny, had also suffered aerial and arti-

lery bombardment in the night, but Chechen separatists were still fighting there.

By midday Saturday intermittent artillery fire could be heard coming from the combat zone.

Argun and Shali, together with Gudermes, 30 kilometres (18 miles) east of Grozny, form the backbone of the Chechen resistance to the Russian armed intervention, launched on Dec. 11 to crush a three-year-old government of independence unilaterally declared by Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The three towns enclose an arc of territory in the southeast of the Caucasus republic.

Meanwhile a search team from St. Petersburg left for Chechenya Friday to look for two journalists who disappeared in a rebel-held region of the war zone two weeks ago.

Maxim Shabalov, a correspondent for the St. Petersburg daily *Nevsyko Vremya* and Felix Titov of the St. Petersburg daily *Chas*, had also suffered aerial and arti-

lery bombardment in the night, but Chechen separatists had no contact with their families or colleagues since early March, said Andrei Sharogradsky, a correspondent at *Nevsyko Vremya*.

The two went to the region without accreditation required by the Russian government for entering Chechenya. It was Mr. Shabalov's fourth trip to the battle zone since the Russia sent troops into the rebellious republic in December.

Mr. Sharogradsky said they were last seen heading to rebel-held territory on the outskirts of the capital Grozny.

Members of the search team had said they were ready to cross Chechenya on foot in search of the journalists, or at least information of their whereabouts.

The search team includes colleagues from *Nevsyko Vremya* and *Chas*, *Pik*, other St. Petersburg journalists, city officials, and Mr. Shabalov's father. They will be joined by a Chechen official with ties to rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, Mr. Sharogradsky said.

Crimean parliament debates Ukraine sanctions

SIMFEROPOL, Ukraine (R) — Parliament in Ukraine's pro-Russian autonomous region of Crimea, split into radicals and moderates, debated a response Saturday to the abolition of its constitution by Ukrainian authorities.

Outside, about 300 mainly elderly protesters shouted slogans in support of Crimea's separatist President Yuli Meshkov, whose job was also eliminated by the Ukrainian parliament Friday.

Meanwhile, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman reported progress Saturday in defining a new mandate for United Nations troops he had earlier threatened to evict from his country.

The glass and concrete building was ringed by police and paramilitary guards, and officials said an extra contingent of Ukrainian riot police had been dispatched to the region. But the centre of Simferopol, a dusty, featureless city, was quiet.

Mr. Meshkov told deputies that Ukraine's decision was based on "hysteria" and said telephone lines to his office had been cut and his personal guard disarmed by police.

He then emerged from the building to shouts of approval from the crowd and urged

them to write letters to Russian authorities to support Crimea's separatist authorities.

"This situation reminds me of Germany in the 1930s. They're trying to intimidate us," he shouted. "Together we shall win."

Crimea's parliament stripped Mr. Meshkov of most of his powers last year during months of infighting between rival factions. Support for him in the chamber remains in question.

In Kiev, newspapers printed the national parliament's measures with unusual speed — officially making them law.

In addition to a ban on the constitution, long denounced by Ukrainian authorities as separatist, Kiev deputies voted to launch criminal proceedings against Mr. Meshkov.

Two-thirds of Crimea's people are ethnic Russians. Since the collapse of Soviet power, many Crimean politicians have scarcely concealed their aim of restoring Kremlin rule.

He was referring to Russia's campaign to quash separatism in Chechenya and President Nursultan Nazarbayev's dissolution of parliament in Kazakhstan.

The strategy for peace is the strategy to save Karachi

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New life for League

THE ARAB League which celebrates its 50th anniversary next week is \$100 million in the red. How fitting for the Arab member states to show their indifference if not outright contempt for the Cairo-based Arab organisation than to stop paying their contributions completely and on time!

The 22 member organisation had to borrow \$4.7 million last year to defray its annual administrative costs. Its budget for this year stands at \$27 million out of which only \$20 million has been collected. When the Arab foreign ministers meet in Cairo later this month to discuss this growing financial problem they can expect to find the lack of Arab enthusiasm for and faith in rescuing the League among the primary causes for the absence of full financial commitment to it.

The League has only itself to blame for not receiving the kind of support that it deserves. By any standard, the organisation requires a complete overhaul if it expects to prove its relevancy and effectiveness. Its bureaucracy is anything but productive or imaginative. The infrastructure of the organisation has not witnessed any meaningful review for decades. It is stagnant in more ways than we wish to name. On top of all these problems there is the absence of political will to do anything about them.

Of course we would like to see all the Arab capitals renew their commitment to the League. We would want to see the annual contributions paid in full and on time. But we would also wish to see the League rise up to the challenge of the contemporary era by becoming more vibrant and effective. As it is the League's operations and contributions leave much to be desired. Above all the Arab organisation needs new blood and new ideas. That is why we see the League's crisis as at least partly self-inflicted. As for the woes from the outside, they stem basically from existing archaic ways for decision taking and making.

It is high time that the League went democratic, mainly by amending its Charter with a view to adopting decisions on the basis of majority votes and not unanimity. That way the Arab capitals might have an incentive to renew their faith and trust in what otherwise should be their foremost political institution.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily on Saturday said in its editorial that the activating of the role of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee and the signing of the minutes of its meetings in Cairo on Friday reflect the exemplary relations that should exist among Arab countries and pave the way for achieving Arab reconciliation on the basis of mutual respect. The newspaper said the joint statement issued at the end of the committee's meetings stressed the importance of having such relationships between the two countries and the need to coordinate their efforts in various fields. It said the statement also pointed to important steps taken by Iraq to implement the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and affirmed the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and achieve stability in the region. It added that the statement has also called for progress in the peace talks between the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese on the one hand and the Israelis on the other so as to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region. The newspaper said coordinating Arab stands, achieving Arab reconciliation, supporting the Arab League, bringing Arab-Israeli negotiations to success and alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people constitute legitimate Arab demands aiming to serve regional security, stability and development. It said these demands also constitute a basis for establishing inter-Arab relations on solid grounds.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i, Mahmoud Al Rimawi, on Saturday called on the Arabs to review the past achievements of the Arab League, its present role and ponder its future. The columnist said the Arab League is not responsible for the Arab disasters nor the state of weakness plaguing the Arab World, but still the league is playing the role of a "negative witness," which has not seen nor heard anything going around. He said the leadership of the league is doing nothing to address the current situation or activate the role of the league.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

The lessons from Casablanca summit

AFTER THE Casablanca economic summit (September 1994) will come the Amman economic summit (October 1995). Since the big event in Amman will be a continuation or follow up of Casablanca, it is worth our while to extract and study the lessons from the first summit in order to avoid the short-comings and gross mistakes and faults committed in Casablanca.

First of all, it is not known why the meeting in Casablanca was organised as a summit and not as a conference or a festival. Summits normally take place among governments at the level of the heads of state. The Casablanca meeting, on the contrary, was a mixture of governments, businessmen, multinational corporations and all those who could afford to pay the fee and pay their hotel accommodation and air tickets.

The Casablanca meeting was not organised by the government of Morocco, even though King Hassan delivered a ceremonial opening speech. The two organisers were an American private institution, namely the Council on Foreign Relations, and a Swiss private institution, The World Economic Forum in Davos. Perhaps this was the first time governmental delegations take part in a basically commercial and private meeting.

More important, most governments which rushed to attend the Casablanca conference had no idea of its procedures, the machinery of decision making, the text of its declaration and the manner by which differences within the conference can be resolved. For instance, many did not know who had the right to vote. Was it a one-man one-vote system or was it a one-country one-vote one? Would individuals, corporations and governments vote on equal footing? Would such mixed voting be binding for the participants, especially governments? Did the final declaration

of the summit/conference represent a consensus among participants and bind them or was it merely a press release which represented the views of the organisers?

Once the Casablanca conference ended and was evaluated, observers were able to conclude that Israel was the major, perhaps the only, beneficiary of the affair. And that was not from an economic point of view as one may expect from a basically economic function, but from a political point of view, as the summit turned out to be a political triumph for Israel. This explains the big Israeli delegation, consisting of nine ministers led by the prime minister. Journalists called their arrival "landing."

The final declaration, which reflected basically an American-Israeli point of view, called for the establishment of a Middle Eastern order, which the participants were not given an idea about its nature and particularities. The declaration called for the removal of the Arab boycott of Israel and the normalisation of relations without any mention of withdrawal from the Arab occupied lands, which contradicts the land-for-peace formula.

It seems that Jordan went to Casablanca having in mind the financing of peace projects to the tune of \$18 billion. This did not impress the businessmen who came to Casablanca to search for profit opportunities, not to finance peace. Nor did this impress the governments, which are not in the habit of pledging millions or billions of dollars in such a popular gathering, without detailed bilateral negotiations.

To add insult to injury, the Arab League secretary general attended the Casablanca summit to sign the Arab order's death statement and the replacement of the Arab order by another Middle Eastern order led by Israel.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CUTS FUND TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS



A clash of civilisations: Pentagon rhetoric on the Islamic threat

By John King

UNITED STATES Secretary of Defence William Perry used a NATO forum in early February to signal the growing concern felt in U.S. defence circles about "Islamist Islam." At an informal NATO meeting on security concerns in Munich, he presented to America's NATO allies the Pentagon's view of the challenge mounted by Islamist insurgents in North Africa, stating that they threaten otherwise stable regimes with which the West has good relations. The potential for terrorist attacks in Europe or elsewhere in the West, or on Western interests, was in Mr. Perry's view another factor. And a third was the spread of what he called "weapons of mass destruction" — and clearly the U.S. defence secretary had nuclear weapons very much in mind. NATO had a legitimate interest in securing Europe's Mediterranean frontier, and, with the organisation seeking a new role after the cold war, the containment of Islamist insurgents was, in Mr. Perry's view, another factor. 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Hidden enemies of a bitter mountain war

By Robert Fisk

IGOUJDAL — High in the Kabyle mountains 200 miles south of Algiers, Ahmad Boudra and his little army of peasants had quite a shock when they shot dead Si Mohammad Mustafa in the wadi behind their village last month. He had been leading a band of Islamists through the forest when he was cut down by a brace of old hunting guns; but what astonished Mr. Boudra was a note stuffed into the dead man's pocket.

"The following have been condemned to death," it announced in biro.

"Ahmad Boudra, mayor of Igoudal, his father Si Ahmad..." And it went on to list 28 other men in the village. The grubby paper was signed "GIA," for "Islamic Armed Group."

Mr. Boudra seems undaunted by the discovery of his own death sentence. Tall and red-faced dressed in a long, pale brown coat, the former supermarket manager has no intention of abandoning his Dad's Army of threadbare militiamen with their ragged trousers and tattered boots, their often toothless mouths, their calloused hands clutching engraved hunting guns from Brescia, old French service rifles — "Made in Tulle, 1949" it says on most of them — and World War II sub-machine guns with "Waffen SS" still visible on the stock. "All our men are loyal," Mr. Boudra says proudly. "They will never betray our republic."

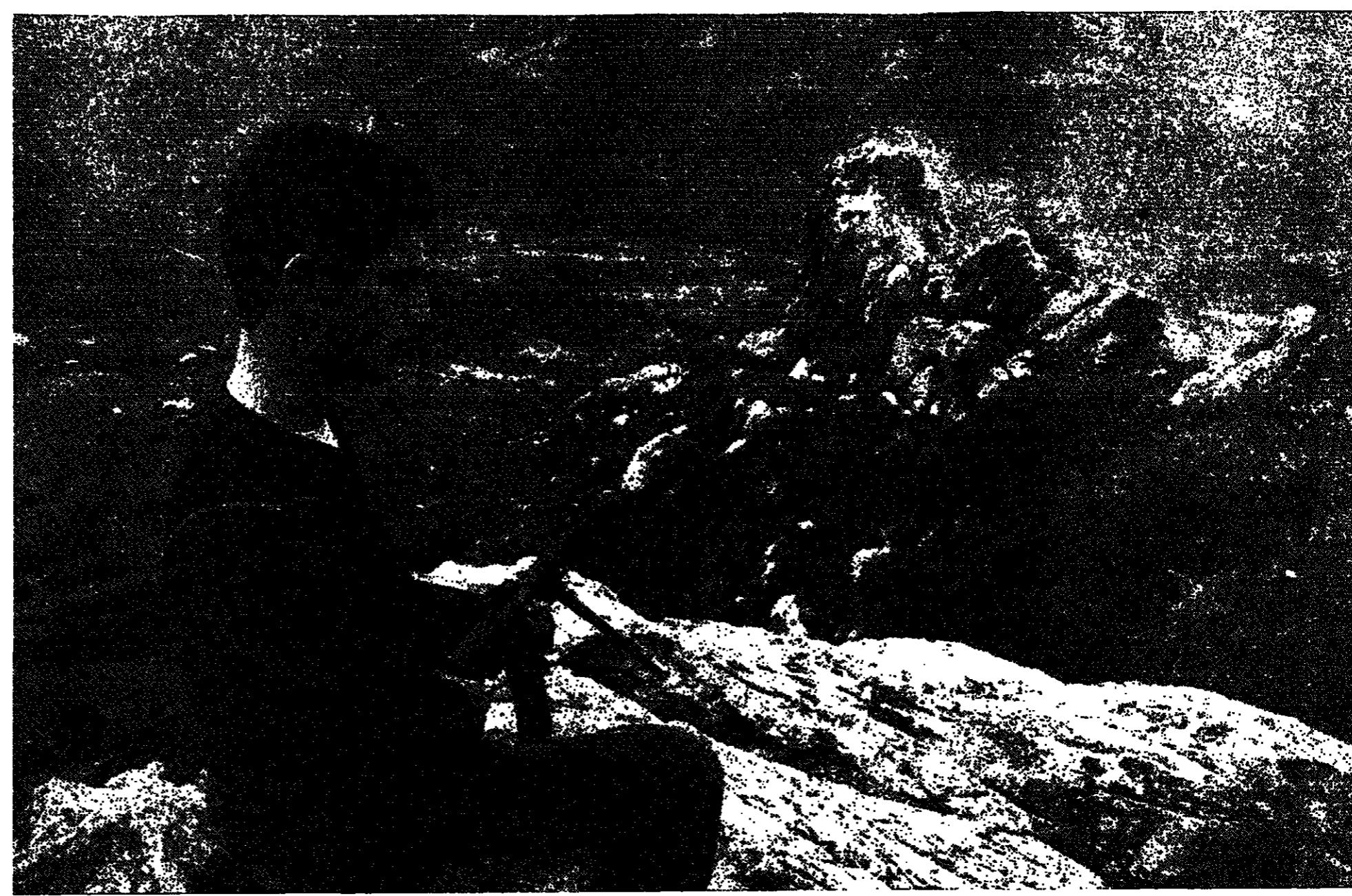
Nor, on the face of it, is there any reason why they should. Up here in the Kabyle mountains, where the Mediterranean winds dark blue through the ravines and the hillsides are blackened by massive man-made fires which have burned through the forests that provided night-time cover for the GIA, Mr. Boudra's 230 militiamen are defending their homes. And they have their counterparts in neighbouring villages, 600 men in all, Berbers fighting the "Islamists" — columns which nightly penetrate the wadis on the

way to Algiers or to steal guns from the less suspecting villages of the Kabyle mountains.

"Over there, below Mount Tighine, the GIA caught two of the men from Bouamane the other night," Mr. Boudra says, pointing across the valley to an unburned hill. "A taxi-driver and a shepherd were stopped on the road. The terrorists wanted the taxi and didn't want the shepherd to see them. So they slit their throats and left them beside the road. You see, we have to look after ourselves. The government supports us and the local communal police are in charge." And sure enough, in the village square, a man called Mohammad Boussoualem in an old blue uniform tells us he is the police chief — which is why he is holding a more modern Kalashnikov to match the corporal's stripe on his shoulder.

As always in Algeria, however, things are not quite what they seem. For here in the Kabyle mountains, many local Berbers are troubled by the growth of the government-sponsored militias, fearful that their real purpose is less to fight Islamic "terrorism" than to repress the Berber Cultural Movement, which is demanding the teaching of the Tamazight language in schools and threatening to boycott presidential elections if local universities do not adopt it. Some of the men of the Kabyle mountains, especially those close to the Front des Forces Socialistes party, are more disenchanted with the Algiers government than with the banned Islamic Salvation Front with whom they are supposed to be at war.

Officially, every member of this rag-tag army must be vetted by the authorities, must carry only his own hunting gun, must obey the instructions of the police corporal. But how do you vet the menfolk of every isolated village? And how do you account for the old boy who climbed "out of" a sheep-wagon in Igoudal with an Italian hunting gun,



A peasant Algerian Berber stands guard outside his Kabyle village

only to admit to me that he didn't know where it came from because "it was given to me by the police?" And how do you explain the fact that Si Mohammad Mustapha, the local Islamist leader, shot dead by Mr. Boudra's men, comes not from far away Medea, as the villagers would have you believe, but from the next village down the mountainside. Si Mohammad was also a local Berber.

Was this not, I suggested to a thin, eloquent middle-

aged man from the Kabyle capital of Tizi Ouzou who had arrived in the village, how the Lebanese war began, with locally recruited villagers turning into gunmen loyal to individuals rather than the state? "Impossible," he roared. "These men are Algerians fighting for Algeria, who are crushing the fascism of fundamentalism." He spoke in French, a language the villagers did not understand; although he turned out to be a man who had good reason to speak the

language. He was Nordi Amrouche, only son of Colonel Ait-Hamouda Amrouche, the most ferocious of all FLN fighters in the 1954-62 war against the French, a man whose systematic purges and throat-slashing of Algerian comrades left 3,000 FLN men and women dead before he himself was shot by the French in 1959. His son was a man — who unselfconsciously referred to the Boulevard Amrouche in Algiers as "The Boulevard of My Father"

— who would know all about loyalty and the lack of it. It was also in these mountains that the French army found some of its most loyal Algerian supporters, men who would fight the FLN guerrillas and whose fate, often as not, was what the French called "the Kabyle smile," a slicing open of their throats. FLN terror thus cut down many villagers in these remote hills as brother killed brother. And today, there are Berbers who suspect the village mili-

tias are more loyal to the former FLN party than the republic of Algeria, supporting a ruling clique against any Berber friendship with the "Islamists."

This is not a thesis that would command itself to the son of Colonel Amrouche. "It's the villagers who asked to carry out their own protection," he says. "It was they who decided to protect themselves from the terrorists at night, sealing off their villages from sun-down to sun-up. I am myself

a militant in the Berber Cultural Movement. But we won't be able to speak any language at all if we cease to exist. Here everyone is mobilised for the struggle against the terrorists." And the villagers dutifully chorused the same refrain as they stood above their cherry orchards, their fig trees and potato fields, and their sheep pastures, country boys for whom the words "civil war" still do not make sense.

The Independent

King reaffirms commitment to peace

(Continued from page 1)

Prince Hassan visited Bonn last week and held talks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in a meeting attended by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. During the meeting a joint Jordanian-Israeli proposal for water projects as called for in the Oct. 26 peace treaty was believed to have been presented

to Chancellor Kohl.

Following the talks, Jordanian and German officials said Germany had indicated its willingness to participate in the financing of the projects after feasibility studies are carried out on the projects, estimated to cost around \$400 million.

The European Union has

agreed to finance the studies with a grant of 11 million European currency units (about \$14 million).

German economic aid and technical expertise have helped Jordan develop its water and irrigation systems in the Jordan Valley.

German officials say that Jordan ranks as the largest recipient of German aid in per capita terms.

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota after the Washington engagements to undergo a routine medical check-up.

The King, who underwent surgery at the clinic in August 1992, had his last check-up there last year and received a clean bill of health.

Since then, the King underwent a minor surgery in Austria for an ear infection and related treatment in Amsterdam early this month.

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Fateh wants Abbas to head negotiations

(Continued from page 1)

signed the peace agreement with Israel.

A PLO Executive Member said the meeting was debating whether to suspend the talks or shake up the negotiations.

"We are discussing means to correct the peace process and have negotiations get out of the impasse, including by suspending them until Israel implements its commitments," Suleiman Najab said.

"There is a strong tendency toward suspending the negotiations, but this is still under discussion," he told Reuters.

"The PLO is unanimous in considering that negotiations have reached an impasse... and that the Israeli side has not implemented what it committed itself to."

Mr. Najab said the PLO wanted greater international involvement in the peace talks, especially by the United States and Russia which co-sponsored the peace process launched in Madrid in 1991, "because bilateral negotiations do not give us guarantees and allow Israel to escape its responsibilities."

Observers said chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath was accused by some Fateh Central Committee members of not being tough enough in the negotiations.

Dr. Shaath said Friday that Fateh had decided to draw up a detailed plan to end the "paralysis" in the negotiations on extending autonomy to the West Bank.

Dr. Shaath and another Fateh Central Committee member were not at Saturday's meeting as they had already left for the Gaza Strip.

The two-day meeting of the 18-strong PLO Executive Committee started on Friday night with 11 members attending. The others, representatives of dissident groups or independents, have boycotted the committee's meetings since the movement

Jordan seeks to present its case

(Continued from page 12)

their confidence that the completion of these steps would remove the remaining problems paving the way for ending the sanctions.

The statement also emphasised the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and achieving stability in the region.

The two sides also agreed

to the need to free the Middle East of all mass destruction weapons to guarantee balanced security for all parties, including Israel.

Mr. Kabariti said that Arab League members will have to agree on one of three proposed formulas related to the duration of the treaty.

The first, he said, was the

American proposal of an indefinite extension of the treaty. The second was an Indonesian proposal for a 25-year extension, while the third, which the foreign minister believes to be the most appealing, is a proposal of a 25-year extension subject to renewal every five years.

The third suggestion, would pave the way for a collective request by signatories that Israel join the treaty after five years when the Jewish state's peace talks with other Arab parties would have materialised into peace agreements, thus eliminating Tel Aviv's claims that Israel remains under threat from regional powers as long as peace in the region is not comprehensive to include all parties concerned.

The men were apparently heading back towards Kuwait where they were apprehended by Iraqi police," Mr. Fahmawi said.

Part of Umm Qasr was ceded to Kuwait three years ago, when the United Nations redrew the border after the 1991 Gulf war.

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President Fidel Castro and President Francois Mitterrand during their meeting in Paris Monday

Castro charms the French

By Alister Doyle

Reuter

PARIS — Looking uncomfortable in a sharp business suit, Cuban President Fidel Castro has charmed many in France with his romantic revolutionary aura while repelling others as a communist dinosaur.

Mobbed more like a pop star than a pariah during a rare four-day visit to a Western democracy, he has lunched with President Francois Mitterrand, toured the Versailles Palace of Louis XIV and admitted admiration for Napoleon.

Mr. Castro might have returned home to Caribbean island on Thursday convinced that many French back the socialist ideals of a 1959 revolution that have driven hundreds of thousands of Cubans into exile.

In one crush, at UNESCO headquarters, adoring supporters chanted "viva Fidel" and blocked his path. The 68-year-old leader joked that not since World War I battle of Verdun had it taken such an effort to advance a few meters.

"We came to say a last goodbye to the 'memory of the Ayatollah,'" said a young working-class couple.

Among the mourners were many young "basiji" or revolutionary militiamen.

At Versailles on Wednesday, Japanese tourists gasped and snapped pictures of Mr. Castro, reckoning his visit to be an unexpected bonus in the 17th century palace built to

glorify the autocratic "sun king."

Lapping up the attention, Mr. Castro also won warm applause from French business leaders, telling them they had a "historic role" to play in helping the country overcome a crippling 34-year-old U.S. embargo.

"I'm converting capitalists to socialism," he quipped.

He said he was too old to be lured to capitalism despite an ideological slide from Marxist-Leninist ideals in wooing private capital to help Cuba out of an economic mire partly caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Forsaking his trademark green military fatigues for cool business suits on his more formal engagements, he has even admitted he does not even know how to do up a tie — and had to get someone else to do it.

"Since my time in the mountains, I got into the habit of wearing comfortable clothes," he said.

Of his grey beard, he said he had saved 10 minutes a day by not shaving since before the revolution. "We did not have time to shave... and later on the beard became a symbol," he said.

Swept round in a tightly guarded motorcade and generally given the honours reserved for important

heads of state, Mr. Castro has been almost oblivious to criticism. "I haven't seen any demonstrations, I'm having fun," he said.

Prime Minister Edouard Balladur sharply distanced himself from Socialist Mitterrand's decision to receive Mr. Castro, and even Lionel Jospin, the Socialist candidate trying to succeed Mr. Mitterrand in May presidential elections, branded Mr. Castro a "dictator."

Exiled Cuban novelist Guillermo Cabrera Infante compared Mr. Castro's French visit to the welcome once accorded to Stalinist Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, executed during the collapse of East European communism.

And the conservative daily *Le Figaro* said Mr. Mitterrand had greeted "the cruellest dictator of the new world bringing out the Republican Guard: rolling out the red, blood-red carpet."

But many in France seemed entranced by the almost mythical aura of a man who overthrew the Batista dictatorship and has maintained a tropical outpost of socialism on the doorstep of a superpower.

Even Mr. Balladur voiced opposition to the U.S. embargo, which Mr. Mitterrand has called "stupid."

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 1995

Kuwait woos foreign investment

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait Saturday announced projects to attract foreign investment into the stock market and said it was considering foreign management and partial ownership of public utilities.

The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the government's investment arm and privatisation manager, said state sell-offs were helping prepare the economy for the greater efficiency needed to attract foreign capital.

KIA Managing Director Ali Al Bader told an investment conference the KIA and other major investment houses were considering establishing a Kuwait investment fund to be listed on major international stock exchanges.

"The objective of this fund would aim at introducing new foreign investors to the Kuwait Stock Exchange. It would be managed by an international investment firm and one of the specialised investment companies in Kuwait," he said.

"Laws and regulations are under review to make it easier and more attractive for foreign investors to enter the market," he added.

Only citizens of the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) may own shares on the exchange, although non-GCC nations can buy units in mutual funds dealing in Kuwait stocks.

Diplomats say the measures announced by Sheikh Bader are part of government

plans to liberalise and revitalise a state-orchestrated economy over-dependent on oil and dominated by inefficient state corporations and ministries.

KIA is on the early stages of transferring its total \$2.7 billion stake in more than 60 local companies to the domestic private sector over the next three to five years.

Officials want to attract back to Kuwait some of the estimated \$60 billion to \$100 billion worth of private investments economists estimate Kuwaitis hold overseas.

The government also plans to sell off major state functions such as the communications ministry and allow foreign management and partial foreign ownership of them.

"The government's policy in privatising Kuwaiti public utilities clearly indicates the necessity for attracting international specialised companies to participate in the ownership and management of these utilities," Sheikh Bader said.

Other projects he announced included:

"A review of tax applied to foreign investors to align it with those in states which attracted foreign investors.

Possible establishment of a national investment fund to provide equity finance to small businesses.

— Studying the feasibility of creating a company to provide advanced health care in partnership with the private sector.

Arab Gulf states try to rebuild financial reserves

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are trying to rebuild their financial reserves following a decade of erosion due to defence commitments and a decline in oil prices, according to official figures.

From a record \$34.2 billion in 1984, the reserves of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) plummeted to \$21.8 billion at the end of 1993.

At the end of 1991 they surged to \$23.9 billion then fell to \$20.3 billion in 1992 before climbing again to around \$20.5 billion in 1993, according to the figures obtained this week from the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab League.

The increase in 1993 occurred despite a sharp decline in Kuwait's reserves to \$3.5 billion from \$5.15 billion. The Gulf emirate is still recovering from seven months of Iraqi occupation that ended with the 1991 Gulf War.

A breakdown showed the increase was caused by a large growth in Saudi Arabia's reserves to \$7.43 billion in 1993 from \$5.9 billion in 1992. But the level is dwarfed by the kingdom's 1984 reserves of more than \$25 billion.

"It is clear Saudi Arabia is trying to rebuild its reserves after they dropped to serious levels because it has been forced to withdraw from

Qatar.

The other GCC members are also boosting reserves. In the UAE, they increased to \$5.65 billion at the end of 1993 from \$4.58 billion at the end of 1990 while those of Bahrain rose to \$1.3 billion from around \$1.23 billion. A slight rise was also recorded in

Qatar.

As of the end of 1993, total Japanese development assistance (ODA) had surpassed 12,500 billion yen (\$138 billion), the majority of which has gone to Asia, with Indonesia topping the list, followed in order by China, India, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea and Malaysia.

Japan is primary aid donor to 28 countries, 16 of which are in Asia.

"For us, the problem has become very serious," said one Malaysian diplomat in Tokyo. The rising cost of

Rising yen hitting hard at foreign loan recipients

TOKYO (AFP) — The meteoric rise of the yen is rapidly becoming a nightmare for developing countries receiving low-interest yen loan packages, which Tokyo has already made clear are not renegotiable.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad warned of the dangers of the rising yen for borrower nations during a visit to Japan in October.

"If the yen strengthens, the repayment on yen loans will increase. Only advanced countries are benefitting from the yen's appreciation," he said.

An Indonesian diplomat in Tokyo also voiced concern at the present rises, to which Jakarta as the largest borrower is most vulnerable.

In an attempt to buffer itself against the exchange risks, Jakarta has begun to fill its central bank currency reserves with yen, now accounting for 35 per cent of Indonesian foreign currency reserves, he said.

Nevertheless, in spite of foreign calls for help, Japan has stressed that no loan will be renegotiated simply because of present monetary fluctuations, which it believes have arisen from temporary market speculation.

"We sympathise, but we should respond by taking a long-term perspective," Hiroshi Hirabayashi, head of the economic cooperation bureau, told the budget commission of Japan's Upper House.

He described any reduction in interest rates as "not a good idea."

But Japan's approach is not a new one. When the Paris Club slashed Egypt's and Poland's debt by half in 1991 and 1992, Japan promptly froze all loans to the two countries.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY MARCH 19, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A good time to be in the company of old friends you admire. Go to the right source for valuable information you need for your project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 18) Take time to study a new project that could give you increased abundance in the days ahead and then engage in your favourite hobby for much pleasure in the afternoon.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 18) Put a fine idea to work today and gain the support of congenials. Don't do anything that could jeopardise the present harmony at home.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take care of chores early in the day so you'll have time for recreation later. Make new acquaintances of worth who could be beneficial.

LEO: (July 22 to August 19) Contact good friends you have not seen in some time and deepen relationships today. Avoid one who has given you much trouble in the past and would like to give you more in the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A good time to plan for the future so study your surroundings and make needed repairs. Keep active and be free of boredom.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An ideal day to improve conditions at home so discuss practical ideas and plans with friends and get their fine advice. Strive for happiness in any endeavour.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Recreation is best for you during the early part of the day. Don't begin a new enterprise this evening and avoid trouble which may come your way.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make sure not to react bitterly to remarks made by a careless person in the morning. Study a new venture that could be lucrative in the future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Talking over mutual problems with friends brings right solutions today. Take steps to improve your health and appearance so that other people will notice.

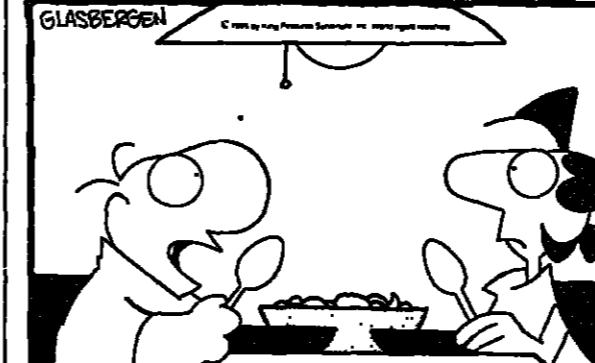
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make needed repairs to property and possessions that will add to their value. Take no risks today with your reputation in any project or problems could result.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get an early start at your activities and cut down on tensions by working at an even pace. Establish more order around you and everything will run more smoothly.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"I put black coffee in the stew instead of gravy. Caffeine makes our dinner conversation a little livelier!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABBLE WORD GAME
Scramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square. To form four ordinary words.

STOIF

01995 Tribune Media Services, Inc.
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KOAWE

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WHARRO

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MEPEXT

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

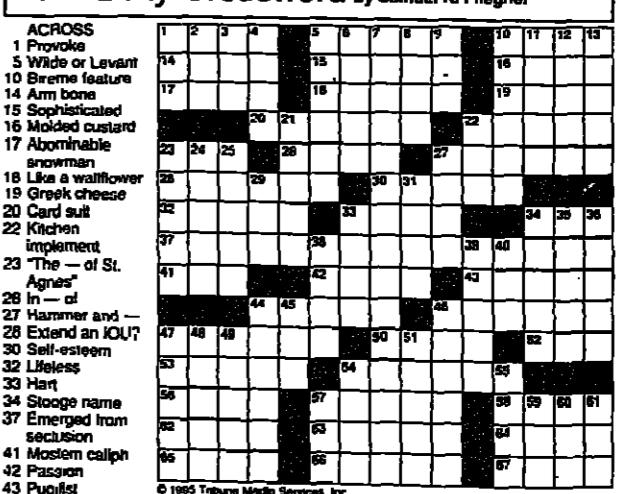
Yesterday's Jumbles: CREEL BLANK THRESH BRONCO
Answer: Where "one too many" can put a marriage — ON THE ROCKS

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: CREEL BLANK THRESH BRONCO
Answer: Where "one too many" can put a marriage — ON THE ROCKS

THE Daily Crossword

By Samuel K. Flegler



Government, taxi owners differ on modernising public fleet of transport

THE MAJORITY of taxi owners are against a plan being drawn by the Ministry of Finance to modernise the fleet of public transport.

According to the plan, owners of old taxis, service cabs and buses which were licensed prior to 1991 (i.e. 1990 and before) will be allowed to purchase newly manufactured cars and buses exempt from customs on the following conditions:

1) New cars should be manufactured either on the same of purchase or the preceding year at the most;

2) The old car is to be handed to the government at no cost;

3) The buyer undertakes not to turn the new customs-exempted car into a private licence plate vehicle at any time in the future.

4) Should the owner decide to turn the car to the private category, full customs have to be paid.

5) The new cars, however, will be subject to a five per cent import fee and a three per cent additional tax on the cars' value.

Taxi drivers were unanimous in asserting that the plan will only be worthwhile when they are allowed to resell the cars or turn them to the private category without having to pay customs. They argue that the value of their old cars, which are to be handed free to the government, should be considered as an equivalent value for the customs because, in the first place, customs were paid on the old cars.

The General Association of taxi owners says the draft plan is not encouraging and does not provide any incentive for owners of old taxis. The association's secretary, Fouad Al Badri, points out that only three per cent of all taxis and service cabs could be slated for write-offs and, he adds, this is the same percentage which could be benefit of the government plan.

The association says that most public cars in Jordan are of pre-1975 models and that at the end of 1994 there were 15,625 taxis and service cabs registered at the association. Of the total, 8,835 are taxis with fare metres, 3,125 are service cabs in the Amman area, 1,000 are taxis on internal routes and 1,406 are taxis serving external routes. There are 1,000 service cabs in the governorates, 154 taxis serving the airport and 105 for training drivers.

A b d u l K a r i m A l Mashayekh, a member of the association's board, explains that high customs, expensive spare parts, costly fuel and low fares are the main reasons behind taxi owners clinging to their old cars. "If these issues can be tackled, there will be no need to think of plans to modernise the fleet of public transport," he said.

Mr. Mashayekh adds: "Since 1989 the association had been demanding a 10 per cent raise in fares after the increase in fuel prices but without success. This situation in addition to the soaring cost of living in general, has resulted in the inability of taxi owners to renew their cars."

A responsible source at the Ministry of Finance said that after receiving the old cars, the government will look into the possibility of benefiting from some of them. If found suitable, these cars will be used by government institutions instead of buying new cars. Another option for the government is to transfer these cars into the private category and resell them to the public. If the cars are found to be useless, the source said, they will be sold as scrap.

Taxi owners are under no obligation to replace their old cars with new ones although the replacement could be effected within a one-year period from the date of the decision.

(To be continued Monday)

French government salvages loss-making Credit Lyonnais

PARIS (R) — The French government launched a massive bailout for state-owned Credit Lyonnais on Friday but, with an eye on next month's elections, vowed the bank would pay its own way in time and not cost the taxpayer an extra cent.

The plan was so complex that analysts said it was hard to assess immediately how much the rescue of France's biggest bank might cost the state.

Lyonnais, which grew to be Europe's biggest bank through massive expansion in the late 1980s, reported a 1994 net loss of 12 billion francs (\$2.41 billion).

That was nearly twice the 6.9 billion francs (\$1.39 billion) loss in 1993, which triggered a previous salvage operation that cost the nation 23 billion francs (\$4.62 billion).

The bank will spin off assets worth 135 billion francs (\$27.13 billion) to a special state-guaranteed company and sell a further 100 billion francs (\$20.10 billion) of assets over the next four years.

At the end of the day it will be left with just 10 per cent of its once-formidable portfolio of stakes in industrial firms.

Among the assets to be removed from the balance sheet are the MGM Hollywood Studio, which the bank owns as a result of an ill-considered 1990 loan, and its corporate finance arm Althus.

Economy Minister

Edmond Alphandery said these measures would stabilise the bank and allow it to show a profit of 500 million to one billion francs (\$100.5 to \$201 million) this year.

"We can't wait to turn the page," bank chairman Jean Peyrelevade told a joint news conference.

The conservative government is under fire for its handling of Lyonnais, which has contributed to Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's nose dive in opinion polls ahead of the April-May presidential election.

Mr. Balladur tried to divert attention from the fiasco this week by denouncing possible fraud in Lyonnais' subsidiaries and demanding a judicial investigation, which had in fact been under way for months.

Mr. Alphandery insisted the new plan was merely a safety net to enable the bank to get back on its feet and pay off its debts.

The state and the taxpayer will not have to increase its financial effort," he said.

The state's action gives Credit Lyonnais time... in time, taking account of the size of its balance sheet and on condition that we put a restructuring plan in place, it is capable of taking responsibility for most of the losses itself," he said.

Under the plan, Credit Lyonnais will effectively hand over a portion of its

future profits to the state. If the assets are sold at a capital loss, the state will absorb the shortfall. But it will also receive any profits made by the holding company.

Although capital losses on the assets floated off were hard to predict, Mr. Alphandery said 50 billion francs (\$10.1 billion) was an approximate figure for the gap in the accounts.

Cash earned by the state from a 20-year interest-free loan advanced to it by Credit Lyonnais and the proceeds of the bank's eventual privatisation would plug that "hole," he said.

Last year's rescue triggered an outcry and calls for a public inquiry. A parliamentary panel singled out ex-chairman Jean-Yves Haberer for much of the blame.

Pending announcement of the latest rescue, which won a tentative green light from the European Commission this week, the bank's non-voting shares were suspended on the Paris bourse, as were shares in defence electronics firm Thomson-CSF, which has a 19 per cent stake in Credit Lyonnais.

Mr. Peyrelevade denied reports that the bank's efforts to return to health will entail slashing its workforce by at least 7,000.

The communist-led CGT

Union denounced the rescue as a "suicide plan" which threatened jobs and service to the bank's clients.

Mandela to spearhead S. Africa trade drive in Arab Gulf states

JOHANNESBURG (R) — President Nelson Mandela will spearhead a South African drive for increased trade and ties with the Arab World in an official visit to the Gulf early next month, the foreign ministry has said.

It said Mr. Mandela, 76, would visit Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain during the second week of April. Further details would be released later.

Government officials said Mr. Mandela would most likely not go to Saudi Arabia, the biggest and richest of the Arab Gulf states, because he visited the oil-producing kingdom last year.

He was, however, expected to hold talks with Saudi officials during the visit.

Latest SAFTO figures, for the first 11 months of 1994, showed four billion rand (\$1.1 billion) in an unspecified section in which details of South Africa's oil purchases were obscured during the apartheid era and which has yet to be "deciphered," officials said.

South Africa, which sold long-range Howitzers to Oman last year, was trying to interest Gulf states in its Rooval (red kestrel) attack helicopter, which has yet to find a foreign buyer.

Tony Twine, of Johannesburg-based economic consultants Econometrics, said South Africa's arms manufacturers, whose domestic market was being dismantled now the country was at peace with its neighbours, were anxious to find foreign buyers.

"The (Gulf) Arabs have got lots and lots of petrol

for their size... they are enormously rich and a very good target for South Africa's trade expansion," Mr. Twine told Reuters.

"We need their oil and they have enormous buying power for South African goods," he said.

Figures for arms exports to Gulf states and oil imports from them are not included in the breakdown of trade statistics at the South African Foreign Trade Organisation (SAFTO).

But Linda Smith, an economist at SAFTO, said the rest of the trade between Pretoria and the Gulf states was heavily weighted in South Africa's favour.

Latest SAFTO figures, for the first 11 months of 1994, showed four billion rand (\$1.1 billion) in an unspecified section in which details of South Africa's oil purchases were obscured during the apartheid era and which has yet to be "deciphered," officials said.

In the same period, South African exports, mainly mineral products, fruit and vegetables, to the six GCC states were valued at \$39 million rand (\$1.76 million).

Fruit and vegetables accounted for nearly 60 per cent of South Africa's 207 million rand (\$58 million) exports to Saudi Arabia and more than 90 per cent of its 138 million rand (\$38 million) exports to Bahrain during that period.

Non-oil imports from the Gulf, mainly chemicals and transport components, were valued at 103 million rand (\$28.6 million).

Western oil refiners burdened by overcapacity

LONDON (R) — Overcapacity is now a key problem confronting the Western downstream oil business.

Critics say companies have built too much refining capacity and are suffering the consequences of their own over-optimistic demand forecasts. Others say it's more charitable to say they have been hit by market changes that were impossible to predict.

Either way, the year has not started well for the oil business. "1995 looks bad for refining. I've hardly ever seen it this bad," says Keith Hamm of London-based analysts Petroleum Economics Ltd (PEL).

Part of the malaise is blamed by analysts on Russia which keeps pumping out oil products for export in defiance of economic logic.

After paying the cost of freight from a central Russian refinery to a consumer in Germany, Russia would gain more by exporting crude oil directly instead of processing it.

Refiners are losing a dollar per barrel where they were looking to make a dollar," PEL's Hamm said.

Norway's state-run oil company Statoil has announced it was cutting throughputs at its refineries in Scandinavia. This follows

similar statements by the European arms of U.S. giants Exxon, Texaco, Mobil and Conoco, Italy's ISAB and AGIP, Norwegian OK Petroleum and France's Elf Aquitaine.

It is the first time so many oil companies have publicly announced such cuts—in the past they viewed this information as a commercial secret.

"I think the oil companies are making a song and dance about it because they are hoping to have an effect on the psychology of the market and make people concerned about the availability of oil products," Mr. Hamm said.

Refiners are losing a dollar per barrel where they were looking to make a dollar," PEL's Hamm said.

Norway's state-run oil company Statoil has announced it was cutting throughputs at its refineries in Scandinavia. This follows

Budget cut, lower investment return likely to depress Saudi bank profits

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A slowdown in the Saudi economy caused by sharp budget cuts and a decline in return from overseas investment is expected to depress the 1994 profits of banks in the kingdom, experts have said.

The 12 commercial banks operating in the world's top oil producer and exporter made record profits of around 5.13 billion riyals (\$1.36 billion) in 1993 due to better investment yield and a surge in credits.

But they will not likely reach that level in 1994 due to a drop in credits caused by economic downturn, an increase in loan loss provisions and lower return from overseas assets, mainly government bonds and stocks.

"Some banks made higher profits in 1994 but others reported lower earnings. There are banks which have not yet released their 1994 balance sheets but I suspect the combined profits will reach the 1993 level," said Anzar Ahmad, deputy chairman of the Riyadh-based Consultancy Centre for Investment.

"There are several factors for the slowdown in profits, including the internal economic situation and lower return from international markets," he told AFP by telephone from the Saudi capital.

Nine of the Saudi banks have so far released their 1994 balance sheets, which showed combined net profits of \$3.38 billion riyals (\$901 million).

The balance sheets, published in the Saudi daily Okaz, showed five of them recorded lower earnings while the Saudi-American Bank made record net profits of around 1.01 billion riyals (\$269 million).

Those with lower profits were the Riyadh Bank, the Saudi-British Bank, the National Arab Bank, the Saudi-Holland Bank and the Saudi Cairo Bank.

The National Commercial Bank (NCB), the kingdom's biggest bank, has yet to release its 1994 results. But it made high profits in 1993 and last year it boosted its capital from only 30 million riyals (\$8 million) to \$1.6 billion.

The increase was prompted by official instructions to boost capital adequacy in line with guidelines by the Basle Committee. It also followed restrictions on credits by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency.

Official reports showed the total capital of the 12 banks increased by around 12.4 billion riyals (\$3.3 billion) to 28.9 billion riyals (\$7.2 billion) at the end of 1992 and to around 33 billion riyals (\$8.8 billion) at the end of 1993.

This enabled them to boost credits by 13.4 per cent from 117.9 billion riyals (\$31.4 billion) by the end of 1992 to 133.8 billion riyals (\$35.6 billion) in the second quarter of 1994 against a profit of nearly

74 million riyals (\$19.73 million) in the first quarter.

"Other factors for the expected slowdown in bank profits last year include a rise in provisions for doubtful loans to 164 million riyals (\$43.7 million) from 134 million riyals (\$35.7 million) and an increase in labour costs to 1.16 billion riyals (\$389 million) from around 1.11 billion riyals (\$296 million)."

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SEMEISANT TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 18/03/1995

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ABAS BANK PIG	260	52620	188.500	187.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1850	16978	4.420	4.420
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	500	2125	4.250	4.250
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	250	353	1.400	1.410
THE HOUSING BANK	3100	18662	6.020	6.020
JORDAN BANK	120	149	2.500	2.500
JORDAN GOLF BANK	6900	8460	1.220	1.220
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	6526	24536	3.760	3.760
HEIT KHALA SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1050	3181	3.050	3.000
AMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11785	121508	1.080	1.090
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	250	318	1.250	1.270
BANKS S SECTOR	134611	249087	INDEX NUMBER: 158.30	CHANGE: -0.14%
ANABIAN BANK INSURANCE	1650	3128	1.950	1.850
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	11527	28928	2.450	2.500
JORDAN TRAVEL INSURANCE	100	320	2.000	2.000
ABAS LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	500	1300	2.600	2.600
INSURANCE S SECTOR	14677	36455	INDEX NUMBER: 136.46</b	

Lipton Championships

Philippoussis rallies past Bergstrom

KEY BISCAYNE (Agencies) — When Mark Philippoussis started slowly Friday in the Lipton Championships, he showed no panic. The 18-year-old Australian knows that time is on his side.

An ATP tour rookie and the youngest player in the men's draw, Philippoussis rallied for an opening-round victory over Christian Bergstrom 3-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-2.

At 6-foot-4 (1.9-metres), Philippoussis (pronounced fil-i-poo-sis) hits the ball hard enough to shake loose a few of his consonants, and he's among the game's most promising players. Inconsistency remains a problem, however, as a roller-coaster performance against Bergstrom showed.

"I am definitely going to have a lot of days where nothing will go in," Philippoussis said, "and I will just, you know, get killed out there."

But by the time Philippoussis celebrates another birthday in November, his ranking could approach his age. He reached the final in his most recent tournament, at Scottsdale, losing to Jim Courier but climbing from 272nd to 149th on the ATP computer.

Against Bergstrom, Philippoussis delivered 18 aces and lost only six points on his first serve. The right-handed slugger plays Paul Haarhuis next and could face Wayne Ferreira in the third round.

While the young Aussie continued his climb, two veterans in their second decade on the tour posted mixed results.

Thirty-year-old Mats Wilander rallied for a three-set victory, but 33-year-old Brad Gilbert lost and said he'll wind down his career.

"I will just play a few events where I feel good," said Gilbert, who became Andre Agassi's coach a year ago.

Gilbert lost to Todd Woodbridge, 7-6 (7-5), 7-5. Wilander beat Louis Gloria 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Another familiar name, Patrick McEnroe, beat Horst Skoff 6-3, 7-6 (8-6).

McEnroe notched two of his biggest career victories at Lipton, beating Boris Becker in 1991 and Goran Ivanisevic in 1993. Now, McEnroe joked, he's 1-0 on St. Patrick's Day.

"I called my mom. She said, 'you can't lose — it's your day,'" McEnroe said.

In women's play, 15-year-old junior champion Stephy Haisell of Cypress, Texas, lost her WTA tour debut to



Christian Bergstrom

Asa Carlsson, 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-2).

All seeded players had a first-round bye, but 33 of 64 will be in action Saturday.

That includes defending champion Steffi Graf, top-ranked Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Jim Courier and Todd Martin.

Kafelnikov into St. Petersburg semis

In St. Petersburg, Russia, top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov survived a stress attack to beat unseeded Jakob Hlasek 6-2, 2-6, 6-2 in the quarterfinals of the St. Petersburg Open Friday.

Kafelnikov, the world

number nine, blamed psychological pressure for his second-set scare against Switzerland's Hlasek, his doubles partner.

"I'm tired of the psychological pressure," the visibly shaken Russian said. "I could never have forgiven myself if I had lost in my own country."

"Maybe I won't play tournaments in Russia anymore because the pressure to win here is so terrible."

Two other seeded Russians won semifinal places in the \$300,000 ATP tournament.

Fourth seed Andrei Chernov triumphed 6-4, 6-2 over 17-year-old wildcard entry Nicholas Kiefer of Germany.

Kiefer, the world's number

one junior, was playing in his first ATP tournament this year.

Fifth seed Alexander Volkov beat unseeded Sébastien Lareau of Canada 6-2, 6-3 to set up a clash with Kafelnikov.

Unseeded Guillaume Raoux of France stopped unseeded T.J. Middleton's upset streak by beating the American 6-1, 6-2 to set up a semifinal against Chernov.

Raoux frustrated Middleton by rushing the net and winning 80 per cent of his service points.

Middleton, unranked in world singles, had earlier caused a stir by defeating second-seeded Austrian Thomas Muster.

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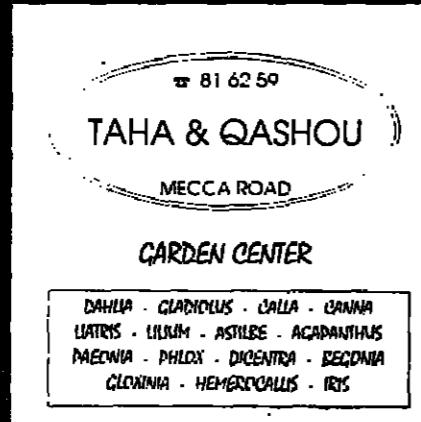
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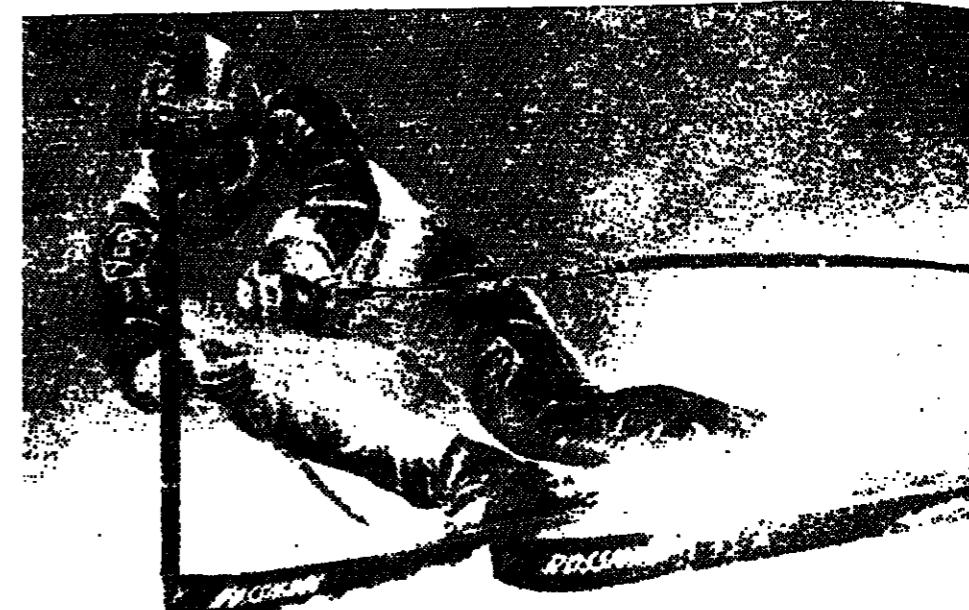
Announces the invitation to tender No.: 17F/95

JPMC announces the invitation to bid No. 17F/95 for the supply of 120 metric tons of open cast gelatine and 500,000 Pcs electric detonators)

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Monday 3.4.1995. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (35) for each set of tender documents. The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Monday 10th April 1995.

Sameh Madani
Managing Director

Tomba completes World Cup hat-trick



Alberto Tomba

BORMIO, Italy (R) — Italian Alberto Tomba, roared on by thousands of home fans, won the giant slalom final on Saturday to clinch a hat-trick of World Cup trophies in a memorable season.

Tomba stormed to his 11th World Cup win in 15 races this season to add the giant slalom to the overall and team titles which he had already sealed.

The triple Olympic champion clocked a combined time of two minutes 13.14 seconds on the long and demanding Stelvio Piste, beating Austrian Guenter Mader into second place by four tenths of a second. Rainier Salzgeber, another Austrian, was third.

"I dedicate this win to my parents who are here today. I'm very tired, it's been a long season," Tomba said as the champagne corks popped around him.

Earlier on Saturday, Swiss Vreni Schneider took the women's giant slalom title when compatriot Heidi Zeller-Baehler, her closest rival, skidded off on the first leg.

But Schneider placed only ninth in the giant slalom and still trails German Katja Seizinger by 76 points in the overall standings. Seizinger was 11th on Saturday.

The Swiss must place either first or second in Sun-

cess in the slalom final here on Sunday, having won seven of eight races in that event this season.

The women's giant slalom final went to Speal Pretner of Slovenia, who had never won a World Cup race before.

Pretner edged out Italian Sabina Panzani by 5/100ths of a second with fellow Slovene Urska Hrovat finishing third.

The top three times and placings in the women's giant slalom final were later confirmed as official.

Ewing lifts troubled Knicks over Bullets

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Their assist leader is out with a sore leg muscle. Their most accurate shooter has been suspended in a long-running feud with the coach.

But the New York Knicks still find a way to win, largely because Patrick Ewing and John Starks refuse to let them falter.

Ewing scored 36 points while Starks added 21 here Friday to lead the 1994 National Basketball Association (NBA) runners-up past Washington 89-81.

The Knicks were without assist leader Derek Harper in the fourth quarter and top reserve Anthony Mason is out with a five-game suspension for detrimental conduct.

But the NBA's top defense kept the Bullets without a basket for 10 minutes and 39 seconds in the second half.

That and key baskets by Ewing and Starks in the final two minutes gave the Knicks their 12th straight triumph over Washington and their 18th in the past 19 meetings over four years.

"We broke out of the funk somewhat," Knicks' coach Pat Riley said. "We've got the smoke cleared. We will just keep moving on."

Combined with Orlando's 107-97 defeat at Indiana, the Knicks (41-21) moved within 5-2 games of the Eastern Conference-leading Magic (48-17).

"We have to keep it rolling," Riley said. "We're not going to play out the regular season just to get to the playoffs. People thought Orlando was out of reach. Now we will see."

Mason was suspended for walking off the bench during a game Tuesday. Mason and coach Pat Riley have been at odds since the forward was suspended for the final three regular season games last year.

"We aren't thinking about that," Ewing said. "We don't worry about that. There's nothing else to say about it."

Mason has rejected a three-year, nine million-dollar offer to stay with New York when his contract expires after this season.

Harper was sidelined by



Orlando Magic's Shaquille O'Neal (right) fights Indiana Pacers' Dale Davis (left) for a rebound (AFP photo)

with the East's top playoff seed possibly at stake.

"We have to win as often as we can, especially over the teams we are supposed to beat," Harper said. "Hopefully we can build on this and make a run."

Rodman ruffles more feathers

San Antonio Spurs forward Dennis Rodman has a knack for ruffling feathers.

When he showed up late for Thursday night's game against Philadelphia in San

RESULTS

Utah	103	New Jersey	98
New York	89	Washington	81
Indiana	107	Orlando	97
Minnesota	80	Cleveland	77
Chicago	87	Milwaukee	86
Dallas	103	Philadelphia	101
Miami	120	L.A. Clippers	98
Boston	118	L.A. Lakers	92
Sacramento	128	Golden State	110

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Richard Gere & Sharon Stone in
INTERSECTION
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PLAZA

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD

CONCORD '1'
Comedian star: Adel Imam —
Bakhit & Andadileh
Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00
CONCORD '2'
Jean-Claude Van Damme
STREET FIGHTER
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00

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Havelange hints two 2002 World Cup Koreas could host

SEOUL (AP) — World soccer supremo Joao Havelange believes South Korea has a better chance of staging the 2002 World Cup if it co-hosts the event with North Korea, Yonhap news agency said Saturday.

Japan and South Korea are in an "equal footing" in their bids to host the competition, the FIFA boss was quoted as saying in a written reply to questions sent by the South Korean agency.

The two football-mad Asian rivals ended up as the only bidders after Mexico withdrew, and both are now mounting multimillion-dollar campaigns to get the nod of FIFA, who will pick the venue in June 1996.

Sources close to Seoul's campaign said there was no question of a joint North-South bid at this point, but

added that if peace came, the peninsula, divided since the end of World War II, could host the tournament as one nation.

If Seoul's bid succeeds, this in itself could be a "catalyst for peace," they said.

Yonhap said Havelange declared that FIFA "never considered the possibility of South Korea and Japan co-hosting."

"It is impossible for several reasons," he said, but did not elaborate. He vowed to remain neutral on the venue "to the last moment as FIFA president or as an objective assessor."

Asian soccer boss Peter Veleppan had said in Kuala Lumpur on March 2 that Japan and South Korea should set aside their bitter rivalry and co-host the World

Cup, which has never been staged in Asia.

The contest has deep political and historical undertones. Japan colonized the Korean peninsula before World War II, after which it was divided into the communist North and U.S.-backed South.

Japan has never made it to the World Cup finals but its professional J-League is immensely popular. It beat South Korea in a penalty shootout to retain the Dynasty Cup in Hong Kong last month.

South Korea has entered the World Cup finals four times — 1954, 1986, 1990 and 1994 — and its bid is being backed by the Hyundai conglomerate.

Both countries have hosted the Olympics.



Retired basketball star Michael Jordan leaves the Chicago Bulls practice via the back door of the Berto Centre in Deerfield, Ill. (AP photo)

Bulls coach says Jordan announcement in three or four days

DEERFIELD, Illinois (AP) — The Chicago Bulls want Michael Jordan to come and play — just not at practice.

Jordan phoned ahead and coach Phil Jackson said he told Jordan to stay away from the Bulls practice because of the swarming media contingent.

"I didn't think there was time to come in and practice under this kind of a circumstance," Jackson said. "It's been a little too hot and heavy here. We thought we could postpone that."

"He called and asked what was like. I said it was pretty tense over here, stay away or a day, we got nothing to announce anyway."

But Jackson did say an announcement on Jordan's future would probably be made in three or four days.

"We'd like to say he'd be back on Sunday, we'd like to say he'd be back on Friday."

We'd just like to say he'd be back period. But we can't say anything because it's not a done deal," Jackson said.

Jackson couldn't confirm that Jordan was having talks with team officials. He did say he thought there had been some talks Wednesday.

"The parties just haven't come to a time framework," Jackson said. "There are a number of items we could speculate on. I'm not sure what exactly is going on. As Bulls we want Michael to be back. Until we have a situation in which we can announce it one way or the other, we have nothing to say."

The number of reporters and cameramen numbered more than 50 again Thursday.

"The time will come when he has to practice regardless of the amount of media," said Jackson, whose team has

put up with several well-publicized incidents this season, most notably Scottie Pippen's repeated criticism of team management.

"We have had plenty of things to feed off all year — it's just another distraction. This is amazing, no doubt about it. We are all amazed at it."

Jackson said if Jordan is ready to play there would be very little adjustment to be made and he wouldn't be afraid to use him in a game immediately.

Jordan hasn't played in a National Basketball Association game since June 1993 when he helped the Bulls beat Phoenix in game 6 of the league finals for their third straight title. He spent a season playing Minor League baseball, but retired last week after getting caught in the middle of the players' strike.

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U.S. seeks more military access to Gulf — Perry

JEDDAH (Agencies) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry on Saturday called for guarantees of American access to ports and air bases in the Gulf to counter potential threats from Iraq and Iran.

Mr. Perry, starting a six-day visit to the region, also called for more joint military exercises with Gulf states and said he will press Saudi Arabia and other states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to bolster joint defence readiness.

Mr. Perry is also aiming to stop U.N. oil sanctions on Iraq being flouted and amid a U.S. offensive against Iran.

The United States is hoping to end the alleged smuggling of Iraqi oil through the Gulf in direct violation of the U.N. sanctions imposed in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

A statement published in Riyadh on Thursday by the U.S. embassy said Mr. Perry was hoping to boost the U.S. presence in the Gulf as well as keep up pressure for continued U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

His visit comes less than a week after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held talks with Gulf officials and leaders in Jeddah.

Mr. Christopher had also asked Gulf states for more facilities for the U.S. Navy which has patrolled the Gulf waters since 1990 to enforce the trade embargo on Iraq.

Since last October when an Iraqi troop build-up on the border with Kuwait prompted a massive U.S. and allied deployment in the region, 12 ships have been boarded in the Gulf for alleged sanctions-busting.

Gulf traders working for Western oil companies say cheap Iraqi oil is transited via Iran.

It is carried on small boats and arrives in the Gulf where it is re-sold at below market prices.

The same traders say the United States has stepped up controls since the start of the year, after closing their eyes to the trade for some time.

The New York Times in February said Iraq had managed to earn \$800 million in 1994 from its oil contraband.

Mr. Perry's visit also comes after U.S. President Bill Clinton on Wednesday signed an

executive order banning oil companies from deals to exploit Iran's oil and gas resources leading to the cancellation of a \$1 billion deal with U.S. firm Conoco.

Mr. Perry said he will assure the Gulf states of U.S. commitment in case of a repeat of the 1991 Gulf war with Iraq.

"We will be planning and proposing joint exercises, both bilateral between ourselves and the other nations, and will be trying to encourage joint exercises among the Gulf countries," Mr. Perry told reporters travelling with him to Jeddah from Washington.

He was scheduled to hold talks with King Fahd on Saturday night and at the start of a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia before going later to Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

Stressing a U.S. strategy of "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran, Mr. Perry said that Baghdad had steadily rebuilt its military capability since the Gulf war four years ago.

He repeated U.S. charges that Iran was making an unnecessary military build-up on islands at the neck of the Gulf.

"Our experience with Saudi Arabia has been that, in a crunch when we need support from them, we get it," Mr. Perry said when asked about continued Saudi refusal to allow U.S. tanks and other equipment to be based on its soil for emergency use.

But he said airfields and ports in the Gulf, especially in Saudi Arabia, were crucial to movement of U.S. forces in case of new hostilities.

Saudi Arabia has built some of the world's most modern military air bases.

A diplomat in Riyadh said

Mr. Perry would chair a meeting of the Central Command of the U.S. forces in the Gulf, based in Bahrain.

About 18,000 U.S. troops are based in the Gulf.

In Kuwait he will inspect

members of the U.S. Air Force stationed in Al Jaber,

and would thank Bahraini authorities for "the facilities they have been giving for

several years to U.S. forces in the archipelago," the diplomat added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Group protests detention of Lebanese journalists

BEIRUT (AFP) — A French rights watchdog said Saturday it had lodged a protest with the Lebanese government after three journalists were detained by the army for allegedly backing a banned Christian party. Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters without Borders), which aims to defend journalists across the world, said the three "had been accused" of supporting the former militia of the Lebanese Forces, in a statement to AFP. The editor-in-chief of the independent television chain CVN, Naufal Dau, "was questioned for five hours by military security services who blindfolded him and beat him" on March 11. Two others had also been detained for several hours. The Paris-based group called on Prime Minister Rafik Hariri to "use all his influence so that journalists are no longer the victims of such acts." The Lebanese Forces disbanded as a militia at the end of the 1975-1990 civil war and became a political party. But it was outlawed last year. Its leader Samir Geagea is on trial on charges of murdering rival Christian leader Dany Chamoun in 1990 and organising a church bombing in February 1994 which killed 11 people.

Yemen denies officer's armed protest

SANAA (AFP) — Yemeni authorities on Saturday denied that an army commander had ordered his troops to shell Aden airport in protest at his transfer to the capital Sanaa. "These reports are baseless and the shots heard Tuesday by inhabitants were part of live-fire military exercises far from Aden airport," the head of civil aviation, Mohsen Al Yussef, told AFP. The Arab daily Al Hayat reported Friday that the commander of a military camp in the southern city of Aden ordered the shelling of the airport. Several shells landed near the runway, the paper said quoting witnesses. A Defence Ministry official who asked not to be named said the fire was part of "exercises carried out by an anti-aircraft defence unit."

Sneha wants joint front against Iran

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli minister on Saturday called for the creation of an international coalition to work to overturn the government in Iran before it obtains nuclear weapons. "We call for the creation of an international front as large as possible which, using economic pressure, would overturn the (Iranian) regime," Health Minister Ephraim Sneha told Israel Radio. The coalition should be led by the United States and include Europe and Japan "to isolate Tehran and prevent it getting nuclear arms," he added. He said the "threat of a nuclear Iran" had increasingly become a top priority for Israel which had to believe the worst that Tehran would have "nuclear weapons as soon as possible." Israel has refused to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) due for renewal next month citing its security concerns from Middle East countries such as Iran.

Police kill 3 militants in southern Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Security forces killed three suspected militants after they shot at police guarding a roadblock in a southern Egypt town, the government said Saturday. An Interior Ministry statement said authorities were tipped off that the three men were planning to attack a police station in Samalout, 120 kilometres south of Cairo.



KING MEETS BAIRANI MINISTER: His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday received Bahraini Information Minister Tareq Mu'ayyad and discussed with him bilateral relations and ways of enhancing them.

During the meeting that was held at the Royal Court, Mr. Mu'ayyad voiced his admiration of Jordan's role and stand vis-a-vis the Palestinian cause. He said Jordan has offered a lot to the Palestinian people.

The King awarded the Bahraini minister the Jordanian Medal of the First Order (photo above) (see related story on page 3).

Jordan seeks to present its case for lifting Iraq sanctions

By Natasha Bakhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan, adversely affected by the United Nations Security Council sanctions imposed on Iraq, wants to participate in the council's deliberations over the issue, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti has said.

"Jordan's adherence to the terms of sanctions imposed against Iraq, once the Kingdom's largest trade partner, has inflicted great damage on us, which gives us the right to negotiate the possibility of lifting or easing the sanctions," Mr. Kabariti told the Jordan Times.

He said that under Article 50 of the U.N. Charter, Jordan has the right to negotiate with the Council over the issue.

He added that Iraq's compliance with a significant number of U.N. resolutions should be equally met by steps towards easing sanctions.

"In agreement with most other countries in the world, Jordan believes that human suffering in Iraq should be put to an end, and that tearing the country apart poses a greater, more general and comprehensive danger than that of granting Iraq its natural role in the Arab World," Mr. Kabariti emphasised.

Mr. Kabariti discussed the issue last night with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Azz, who was on a short visit to the Kingdom.

The U.N. sanctions were imposed on Iraq after Baghdad invaded Kuwait in 1990. Attempts by some Security Council members to ease

sanctions have been countered with stiff American opposition.

An Arab League Council meeting on March 22 will also address the sanctions against Iraq as well as the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will come under review by the United Nations in April.

A two-day meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian higher committee in Cairo last week brought the Jordanian and Egyptian stands towards Iraq closer as evidenced by the meeting's final statement.

The statement said the two sides believed that important steps were taken by Iraq in the right direction towards implementing the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and underlined

(Continued on page 7)

Oman defends calls for easing of Iraq sanctions

MUSCAT (Agencies) — Oman on Saturday defended calls to ease the U.N. embargo on Iraq saying it was not trying to harm the interests of Kuwait or create divisions with other Gulf countries.

"What we do may seem to be prejudicial in the eyes of our Kuwaiti brothers and in other Gulf countries, but in the long-term it will be very useful to them," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yousef Ben Alawi Ben Abdullah said.

"What the Sultanate wants to highlight is the suffering of the Iraqi people because of the embargo and that question cannot be the subject of differences between our brothers in the GCC," he told the Oman daily Oman.

Oman, which is a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, is also part of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) along with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

On Monday the Security Council decided to maintain the embargo imposed on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

But Oman, like Qatar, has

pleaded for the crippling oil and trade embargo to be eased.

Mr. Ben Alawi also defended a visit to Muscat by Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf earlier in March saying it "was not a breach within the GCC nor a success for Iraqi diplomacy."

"For Iraq it was the chance to listen to Oman's advice, which is equally a member of the Security Council, about the need for Baghdad to conform fully with the U.N. resolutions."

"We repeated to Mr. Sahaf that Baghdad must solve the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and the goods seized in Kuwait during the invasion," he said.

Mr. Sahaf visited Doha and Muscat on March 10 and 11 to lobby for a lifting of the embargo, arguing that Iraq complied with U.N. Gulf war resolutions on disarmament and recognising Kuwait's sovereignty.

The visits by Mr. Sahaf to Oman as well as Qatar were the first by a senior Iraqi official to a Gulf Arab state since Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Earlier Saturday, Ethiopia's military and government officials arrived in Al Obeid in an attempt to win the passengers' release.

Sudanese officials had been talking with the hijackers for hours.

The plane was on a domestic flight from Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, to Bahir Dar in the northwest.

There have been numerous hijackings in Ethiopia, most carried out by people fleeing unrest that has plagued the east African country since the 1991 ouster of President Mengistu Haile Mariam.

In Addis Ababa Ethiopian government and airline authorities on Saturday were silent over the hijacking.

The Ethiopian hijackers had demanded the plane be refuelled and flown to Greece and then Sweden. Later, a hijacker with a loudspeaker stepped out of the plane and asked that they be flown to Libya instead, the Egyptian news agency MENA said.

Sudan radio said all five

were armed, but did not say what kind of weapons they had. They were reportedly seeking asylum.

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